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ABSTRACT

A historical overview of the development of the British middle school system is presented in this paper, with a focus on the impact of the national curriculum established by the Education Reform Act of 1988. Based on field observation, information is presented on curriculum, the role of head teachers and faculty, parental involvement, and student activities and assessment. Outstanding characteristics of the British middle school system include a grading system that amounts to a dialogue among teachers, students, and parents and the use of thematic teaching. Negative factors include the adverse effects of the national curriculum, visible in the emphasis on "parents as consumers" of education and the importance given to the meeting of various attainment targets, a new funding formula, and local school management which requires educators to assume many of the functions of business managers or accountants. Special focus is given to potential problems that may develop unless an equitable funding plan is developed. Appendices contain information on school assembly activities, discipline, thematic topics, and science class instruction. (22 references) (LMI)

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# The British Middle Schools at Age Thirty: An American Perspective

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Abstract

British middle level education is undergoing a transformation. Begun in the mid 1960s, its development was similar to middle level education in the United States. However, since the passage of the Education Act of 1988, the National Curriculum, middle level education is literally "caught in the middle."

The programs which were observed demonstrated that the British educators had a concern for their students. Their Personal/Social Education (PSE) is one of the most effective affective programs I have ever seen. Their "purpose built" schools are straight from the pages of middle level pedagogy.

Two areas of particular note are the grading system they use and their use of thematic teaching. The grading system is truly a dialogue between the teacher, student, and parent(s). There is no computation of grades at the end of each term. Rather, written reports are issued two or three times each academic year. The contents of these reports are arrived at through a written and verbal conversation between the student and teacher. It is then sent home to the parents for their input into their child's progress. Retention in a grade is virtually unknown. The students move through their educational process without this fear.

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The idea of thematic teaching is also extremely interesting. In this approach, teachers plan units that involve all the subject areas. The material that is used is either teacher made or student produced. Very little emphasis is placed on textbook. When asked about a class set of textbooks, the British teachers indicated that they did not use only one textbook. Their material was group/research oriented. The students were encouraged to use the library and other resources made available by their various teachers.

However, the British middle schools are facing a crisis as the National Curriculum becomes implemented. The funding of this Act places financial ties to enrollment. The advent of Attainment Target Assessment has led to the publication of each school's composite score on the assessment. Some schools may be forced to close as their students withdraw to attend schools with higher composites. This impact will be felt most severely by those schools that have a high percentage of non-English students.

It will be interesting to see the impact of the National Curriculum on British education, particularly on the middle level, in the years to come.

## Preface

Paul George (1989) provided us with an insight into the functioning of middle level education in Japan. The Japanese educational system as well as the homogeneous nature of their culture has been at the center of many debates. However, how does our educational system compare to that of a country that has a diversity of population similar to ours? How does it compare to a country whose government is similar to ours? How does such a country conduct education at the middle level? These are questions that I have considered in the past few years. My trip to England was designed to answer them.

As an assistant professor in the Department of Middle Grades Education at Valdosta State College, I teach the introductory course in middle grades education. In this course, I discuss the contributions made by William Alexandar and Donald Eichhorn to middle level education in the early 1960s. These two men encouraged American school systems to develop programs to meet the needs of early adolescents. I also mention that a similar movement was taking place in the United Kingdom at about the same time. It was in 1965 that the first middle school proposals were made in England.

When my wife was selected to participate in a leadership conference at St. Peter's College, Oxford University, Oxford, England, I saw an opportunity to examine the middle school system of the United Kingdom first hand--close-up. Through our college's Office of International Programs, contact was made with Professor Hugh Starkey, a French professor at Westminster College, outside Oxford, England. With his assistance I made arrangements to visit three middle schools in Oxford during my first full week. Arrangements for the second week of my visit were made through Mr. David Hill, a senior inspector for the schools of Northamptonshire.

Before departing for England, I was made aware that the United Kingdom was in the early stages of implementing a National Curriculum. As I began my planning, it became apparent that our libraries had very little information about the impact of this legislation on the British schools. Therefore, much of my preliminary planning was not in tune with what I found after I began my study.

Shortly after arriving at my first school, Bayswater Middle School, Oxford, I felt like the most ill-prepared individual to do research. In talking to the head teacher of this school, I began to realize the impact of the National Curriculum. This Act is so

all-encompassing that my whole study had to be revised immediately to attempt to deal with the issues involved with this legislation. During my second week, Mr. Hill and his colleagues, Mr. Chris Green and Mr. Graham Bate, arranged for me to attend a meeting of senior inspectors who were examining methods for teacher assessment. In addition, they arranged for me to attend a meeting of head teachers who were examining ways to implement student assessment.

These individuals also served as my hosts in the Northamptonshire schools. There they presented me with a cross-section of British middle level education. To make my study more complete, they arranged for me to visit various primary as well as middle level schools. This enabled me to see the sending schools as well as the middle level schools in operation.

Each of the schools I visited proved to be unique. Some were comprised of lower-middle to middle class students while others were comprised of mid- to upper-middle class students. Two schools were inner city schools. Their student populations were comprised of children who spoke many languages and practiced an assortment of different religions.

The involvement of the central government is not limited to curriculum as the Act's name might imply.

All aspects of British education are included. It has made all of the maintained schools financially dependent on the central government. This concept was difficult to grasp from the American perspective of local control.

This financial control includes establishing salaries and various stipends awarded to the educational professionals. Centralized control traces its roots to the early 1980s when there were four strong teachers unions in the United Kingdom. However, in the mid-1980s a very divisive strike occurred which lasted for three years. During the strike the government not only attempted to end the strike, it also attempted to break the unions. To do this, individuals who were not educated as teachers were placed in the classrooms of those who were striking. This governmental action significantly reduced the power of the teachers' union. With the unions neutralized, the central government was free to install its program for educational reform.

The experiences I encountered in my study of the British system of middle level education were very interesting. I was constantly reminded that the British government was attempting to implement a curriculum similar to those in place in several of our states. They had taken our idea of a state centralized curriculum and installed it on a national level. As the

government designed this curriculum, however, they showed a general lack of concern for input from their teaching professionals.

It will be interesting to see how far the British government can push the National Curriculum concept. Many individuals are already getting actively involved in working for its alteration if not its defeat. If the British take only one lesson from the American Revolution, it should be that laws imposed on individuals without their consent or input eventually lead to defeat.

On the following pages, I will present a historical approach on the development of the British middle schools. In addition, the various components of the Education Reform Act of 1988 will be examined as they relate to middle level education.

Information obtained from my visits to British middle schools will be presented in Chapter 3. This examination will present the various elements that comprise the British middle schools. Included in these elements will be the curriculum, the role of the head teachers and faculty, and parental involvement.

The final section, Chapter 4, will provide a summary and recommendations arrived at through my study.

# Chapter 1

## British Education and the Development of the Middle School Concept

A similarity exists between the schools in the United Kingdom and those in the United States. These include the age of admission, the layout of both the school buildings and classrooms, and the students who are served.

Additionally, there are similarities in the various problems which confront both systems. These include the integration of minorities into the mainstream of society, attempts to financially equalize traditionally rich and poor areas, a perceived lack of student discipline, and a lack of student achievement in reading and math (F. Parker, 1979; Phi Delta Kappa [PDK], November, 1990).

To develop an understanding of British education, there are two terms which must be defined at the outset---"private" and "public." In the United States the term "private" refers to a school that charges tuition, receives limited or no governmental support, and has a selection process for student admission. A "public" school in the United States is one which receives its financial support from taxes and accepts

all students within its attendance boundaries regardless of their financial standing or ability to learn.

In the United Kingdom, the term "public" refers to schools which are selective in their admissions and charge tuition. "Private" schools in Great Britain are the equivalent of the American public schools. In addition, church schools in Great Britain are also considered schools for the public to attend. They are considered "private schools" and as such, receive funds from the government. It is less confusing to use the terms "funded" or "not funded" when examining British schools. In this way the difficulty over the terms "private" and "public" is eliminated. This study has examined only "funded" schools in the United Kingdom.

A distinction between the structure of the educational systems of the two countries occurred in the early 1920s. It was during that decade that the educational leaders of the United States developed the junior high school concept. Although in practice this format was basically the senior high school on a junior level, nonetheless, it was a break from the existing organizational pattern. It called for a separate building for students between the ages of 12 or 13 to ages 15 or 16. However, the program of studies offered was usually nothing more than a simplified version of



British Education

the curriculum taught in the senior high schools. It was from these origins that the modern day middle school with both a physical and curricular structure for adolescents developed.

In the United Kingdom, the distinction between the various age groups has still not occurred in many of the school systems. However, over the past thirty years some local education agencies have had the foresight to establish schools to meet the needs of the early adolescent.

The passage of the 1944 Education Act in the United Kingdom provided free secondary education to everyone. In addition, it made higher education possible to more people. The passage of this Act produced the pattern for British education as seen in Table 1-1

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Insert Table 1-1 about here

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During the 1950s and early 1960s the British developed an awareness that the needs of secondary education had overshadowed primary education. Evidence of this was seen in the materials, supplies, and facilities given to the secondary schools. This overemphasis was due to the concern that students had to be prepared for university admission. Because of this

unequal treatment, the leaders of government and education were forced to reexamine the basic principles of both levels. One segment of this reform movement attempted to remove the 7 - 11 year old students from the educational exams. These exams were given to determine the course of a child's educational future. This attempt, however, did not receive sufficient support for adoption (Edwards, 1972).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s another reform attempt developed. This attempt sought to alter the organization of the British schools. It was designed to alter the educational format of the students who were 11+ years of age. The thrust of this change did away with the Grammar School/Secondary School division after the Junior Schools. In place of this division, a compulsory comprehensive secondary school was established for students between the ages of 11 and 18.

In the mid 1960s a change in educational thought about early adolescents took place on both sides of the Atlantic. This shift in thought was designed to provide a special program for students who were no longer children, but who were not yet adults. In the United States this increased concern over children in the early stages of puberty brought about the middle school concept. This concept now encompasses grades six

through eight in the most common grade alignment (Alexander & McEwin, 1988).

However, the United Kingdom, unlike the United States, does not use a graded format for their students. Their system uses the student's age to determine his/her educational placement. This emphasis on the child in the middle years altered the first two levels of British compulsory education dramatically. The educational format which emerged may be seen in Table 1-2

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Insert Table 1-2 about here

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British Middle Schools

The British middle schools can trace their roots to the Transfer Points of the Plowden Report of 1962. This report was later transformed into the Education Act of 1964 (F. Parker, 1979). However, the philosophical foundation for the development of middle schools in the United Kingdom utilizes the same concepts as those in the United States. These concepts are: the earlier maturation of children, the higher level of sophistication of the pre-teen group, mastery by the pre-teen group of basic tools of learning, a need for greater individual activity, and the realization that the one teacher/one classroom method of instruction is

inadequate for the early adolescent. In addition, the English were becoming dissatisfied with their pre-World War II educational structure (Edwards, 1972).

Their first proposal for a school devoted to students in the middle years was submitted by the Leicestershire Local Education Authority (LEA) to the Department of Education and Science (DES) during the late 1950s. This proposal was designed to avoid both the building of large comprehensive schools (for students age 12 or 13 to 18 years of age) and the 11+ exams. It suggested that students automatically transfer to a first stage junior comprehensive or secondary school (for students age 10 or 11 to 18 years of age) at age eleven. This plan was approved by the Leicestershire Education Committee in 1957. The following year similar plans were begun in the urban districts of Oadby and Wigston (Edwards, 1972).

It wasn't until the mid-1960s, however, that this Leicestershire plan won its initial acclaim. In that year Sir Alec Clegg, Chief Education Officer of the West Riding of Yorkshire LEA, proposed a middle school for 9 to 13 year olds (British education is discussed in relation to the student's age, not grade level). The West Riding Plan devised a three-tier compulsory educational structure. This format began with the

students entering school at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. When the students reached the age of 9+ they passed to a "middle school." This move was designed to serve as a transition for the students' learning styles. It took the students from the one teacher/one classroom model of their first school to the departmentalized/specialized structure of the secondary schools. The tiers of this system functioned as a 5-9 school, a 9-13 school, and a 13-18 school. This served to keep students in school approximately two years longer than in the existing system. In addition, it also provided the pupils who attended the secondary school the opportunity to have a full three-year course of studies. The effect of such a program was to eventually raise the educational standards of the overall system.

The only problem that existed with the West Riding plan was that under existing legislation it was illegal. To permit the middle school experiment to be officially sanctioned, the Minister of Education, Sir Edward Boyle, guided an amendment to the existing legislation through Parliament (Edwards, 1972). This amendment gave the LEA's permission to submit proposals for establishing schools with age limits below ten and one-half years and above twelve years of age. However, it was not intended

to affect a major change in existing organizations. It was limited only to proposals for new schools.

Shortly after the passage of the Education Act of 1964, two important circulars were distributed. These documents from the DES added to the continuation of the middle school experiment. The first of these was DES Circular 10/65. This document examined the possibility of eliminating the 11+ exams and introducing middle schools with age ranges of 8-12 or 9-13. According to the circular, following the completion of the middle school experience, the student would move to a comprehensive secondary school. This school varied from 12 or 13 to 18 years of age depending on the range of the sending middle school. Initially this plan for the middle school experiment was intended for limited implementation by those LEA's who wanted to experiment with the concept.

The following year, DES Circular 13/66 was published. This circular permitted the LEA's to change the age of transfer from primary to secondary education from age 11 to either age 12 or 13. In addition, the LEA's were forced to prepare methods for the introduction of comprehensive education within their domain. The implementation of this concept was to be based on the physical plants that were in existence at

the time. LEA's interested in developing middle schools were forced to launch their middle school programs without any prior experimentation or evaluation. These programs were placed in buildings that were not designed for the needs of the middle school child. Furthermore, it was not possible for the faculties to receive training in programs designed to meet the needs of early adolescents (Edwards, 1972).

The change to the three-tiered structure required the LEA's to involve both the teacher and the parents in the planning process. The reactions from these groups can best be described as cautious. The traditional dividing line between primary and secondary school stages had become ingrained in the minds of many citizens. The 11+ division had become an administrative rather than an educational barrier to the middle school concept (F. Parker, 1979).

Reports began to come in from the schools which had experimented with the new three tier arrangement--primary school, middle school, and secondary school. These reports supported the middle school concept. They suggested that the one teacher/one classroom concept for the early adolescent age group should be abandoned (Edwards, 1972).

With the success of these initial attempts, the next decision for the LEAs was to choose the educational model for their particular situation. Their choices were between either the West Riding model for students aged 9-13 or the DES plan (Plowden Committee) for students in the 8-12 year range. Various arguments developed supporting each plan. The West Riding plan, however, was more in keeping with the work on cognitive development done by Jean Piaget. With this added reinforcement, the West Riding model began to shift the weight of opinion away from the recommendations of the Plowden Committee (Edwards, 1972). The move toward the 9-13 middle school actually benefited the secondary schools. This occurred since the students stayed in the middle schools for one additional year. In addition, this extra year in the middle schools served to ease the overcrowded conditions at the secondary schools.

In addressing the middle school concept the Plowden Committee (1967) stated:

> If a middle school is to be a new and progressive force, it must develop further the curriculum, methods, and attitudes which exist at present in Junior Schools. It must move forward into what is now regarded as Secondary School work, but it must not move so far away that it loses the best

of primary education as we know it. (Department of Education and Science [DES], 1967, para 333)

With the above statement in place, middle school plans began to be submitted to the DES for approval. The LEA's of West Riding of Yorkshire, Bradford, Wallasey, and Worcestershire were among the first to seek approval for their plans. The models submitted had among them three common characteristics: 1) an ideological justification for the change, 2) a tendency to overstate the case for middle schools, and 3) the introduction of a new school organization, one which had not been validated in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, as Edwards (1972) stated, "[These changes] would have to be introduced in a climate of financial stringency and mainly makeshift premises" (p. 27).

At the outset, the LEAs had to make three major decisions about the middle schools they were proposing to implement. These were: 1) the age range of the students to be served, 2) the proposed curriculum and teaching methods to be employed, and 3) a site for the instruction to take place (Edwards, 1972). The LEA's realized that they were breaking new ground. They also realized that, as with any new venture, mistakes would occur. It was their hope to minimize the number of mistakes associated with curriculum and methods. In

addition, they sought to gradually diminish problems which arose from school design and construction (F. Parker, 1979)

Curriculum

The Plowden Report (1967) addressed the curriculum that was to be implemented in the middle school. It stated that religious education, English, modern languages, history, geography, mathematics, science, arts and crafts, music, physical education, and sex education were to be included for the early adolescent (DES, 1967, chap. 17). It was determined that the arts and crafts would serve as a vehicle for linking the various subjects together. In addition these subjects were to provide a means for students to express their creativity within the middle school (Edwards, 1972). The physical education classes were to take place in an area that would have innumerable uses, only one of which was for physical education (Edwards, 1972).

The report also addressed the subjects of English, history, and mathematics. It stated that English was to be the medium of communication basic to the entire curriculum. The emphasis in history was to be on chronology. It was recommended that math use the

workshop approach, similar to the method used in the primary years.

The thrust of providing a curriculum for the 9-13 year old student as discussed in the Plowden Report (1967) was to serve a dual function. The intent was to incorporate the subject rigor of the comprehensive schools without losing the nurturing atmosphere of the primary school. In addition, the curriculum had to provide an integrated curriculum based on areas of study for the first two years. This concept was to be followed by a gradual and careful evolution to the subject studies during the last two years in the school. The careful maintenance of student records and frequent staff meetings were also involved. The combination of these two became the focal point for discussions about student needs and methods to assist those students who were experiencing difficulties.

Two outgrowths of the movement toward the middle school concept were the notions of "block" study and team teaching. In the former, blocks of time are set aside for the study of the various subjects. These blocks are intended for the teachers to introduce topics to be covered in several disciplines during the same part of the year. The implementation of this concept is designed to give the students a more unified concept of

the topic under discussion. This concept of block teaching encourages teachers to discuss the material they intend to cover in their classes. Eventually, this developed into the idea of combined planning which led to team teaching.

Using the team teaching design for instruction, the topic is introduced in one class and then elaborated upon in other classes. In the team approach of the British middle schools, paraprofessionals and teachers work together to correlate the various topics to the required subjects.

As the middle school movement in England progressed, middle school educators began to ask what should be expected of the students who were entering the middle school? This question became increasingly important since the students who were entering the middle school were coming from a 5-9 school rather than a 5-11 school as they had in the past. However, the corollary to this question, i.e. what should be expected of the students entering the secondary schools, was also being asked by those teaching in the secondary schools. Since the implementation of the middle schools, secondary students were now older (age 13) than these teachers had been previously accustomed (age 11).

The answer to the first question may be found at the primary level. This level is based on the relationship established between the teachers and their students at this level. It is at the primary level where students are encouraged and instructed in the basic rudiments of learning. Students arriving at the middle schools are prepared to continue in their educational growth. In addition, they also are prepared to begin accepting greater responsibility for their learning (Edwards, 1972).

R. J. Dennis of the Somerset LEA answered the question about secondary schools (Edwards, 1972). He stated that students from the middle schools will still be interested in learning. However, they now will have learned how to learn. Furthermore, since these students will have been instructed in how to learn, they also will have acquired sound concepts, developed decision making skills, and possess the judgmental skills to carry out their decisions. He suggested that students moving from the middle schools to the secondary schools have acquired attitudes which accept sound moral standards as the norm. Finally, these students will be equipped with the range of skills necessary for further progress commensurate with this ability (Edwards, 1972).

# Chapter 2

## The National Curriculum

### Background to the Act

The 1988 Education Reform Act is widely seen as the most far-reaching and important piece of educational legislation in England and Wales since the 1944 Education Act (Maclure, 1989). This Act divides the British curriculum into two areas. These areas, the "core" and "foundation", prescribe ten subjects that embrace the British curriculum.

The first of these areas, the "core," contains three subjects: English, mathematics, and science. The second area, known as the "foundation area" contains seven subjects: technology, history, geography, art, music, physical education, and, at age eleven, foreign language (National Curriculum Council [NCC], 1989). These subjects must be included in the curriculum for every funded school. These subjects are in addition to religious (Christian) education which, before the Act, was the only required subject (McLean, 1989). To more fully understand the sweeping changes of the Act, a brief look at the history behind the Act is in order.

The movement to improve the education of children in Great Britain as well as to involve the parents in their child's education can be traced to the Education

Act of 1944. This Act stated that education should be provided according to the wishes of the child's parents (Maclure, 1989).

By the 1960s, however, the parents in England and Wales were powerless. They had no input into the decision-making process of the schools. In addition, they had limited access to the information on the educational progress of their children. They assumed that the teachers knew what was educationally best for their children.

In theory, each teacher had autonomy over the content of the curriculum taught, the texts used, and the methods practiced in the classroom. The only exception to this autonomy was that some attention had to be given to religious (Christian) education. The only manner of accountability in the entire educational process under this Act came from the LEA tests for the children at age 11+. These tests were used to determine the form of the child's secondary education. Additionally, a test was given at age 16--the conclusion of the child's formalized secondary schooling (McLean, 1989).

The movement toward greater parental involvement reemerged during the 1970s. It was during this time that the national government urged schools to give

parents precise information about their children's educational progress (Maclure, 1989). This move on the part of the national government led to popular elections to place parents on the governing boards of schools. This form of parent involvement on the governing boards was made law in 1980.

Two other events occurred before 1988 which served to increase the demand for educational reform. The first was the teachers' pay dispute at the beginning of the decade. This labor problem disrupted the educational process for a three year period and resulted in the teachers' unions becoming highly unpopular. It left them in no real position to deal with the government in the development of the Education Reform Act.

The second event that impacted on the development of the Act was the continuing disagreement between the central government and the local government over control of the schools. This argument set the entire reform Act against a backdrop of conflict. The conflict saw the teachers and local government on one side and the central government on the other (Maclure, 1989).

The 1988 Education Reform Act (comprised of the National Curriculum, Local Management of Schools, Grant Maintained Status, Higher and Further Education,

Assessment, and the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority) extends parental rights. In addition, it relegates local authority officials to little more than consultants whose advice has little sanction. Maclure (1989) stated that the Act has, in effect, strengthened the two extremes of the educational process. The groups of whom he refers are the central government (as represented by the DES) and the local boards of governors. It was the local boards of governors who were given greater autonomy from the local education authorities. The Act makes governors, heads, and staffs accountable in a competitive context (Sherratt, 30 March 1990).

The 1988 Education Reform Act

The Act has placed the legal control for the curriculum of the schools with the Secretary of State. This has served to limit the function of the LEAs. It has established that schools should promote greater accountability in the use of resources and the delivery of "quality education" (St. Peter's College, Oxford University, 24 March 1990).

Another feature of the Act is that the schools are to become more responsive to their "consumers." This notion changes the previous method of delivery for education. Before the Act, it was assumed that the

local authority/teachers knew what was educationally best for the children. Additionally, the teachers were viewed as professionals who knew the most appropriate method to convey their subject(s) within the guidelines of LEA directives. The government, however, viewed the LEAs as being ineffective, dealing in broad generalities, and very expensive (St. Peter's College, Oxford University, 24 March 1990).

The government supported the business model was the most efficient way to run not only businesses, but virtually any organization (Burrows, 30 March 1990). The Education Reform Act has forced the LEAs to give greater autonomy to both the local schools and their governing bodies. Therefore, the group which has gained the most control are the governors of each of the schools.

Conversely, the group which has lost the most under the Act has been the political and professional personnel of the LEAs. Those who were the politicians in the LEAs during the 1960s and 1970s had a great amount of influence on the education of English children. Their influence was obtained through their work in curriculum development from monitoring the work of the individual teachers and schools. Under the Act, these politicians were attacked from both the individual

school authorities, i.e. the governors, and parents. These two groups have now been handed power previously reserved for the LEAs. This parental initiative is directly linked to the concept of parental choice of schools. As parents choose their child's schools, this becomes directly related to the funding of the individual school (Maclure, 1989).

The Act has undermined the notion of a local system of schools. In its place has been established a network of separate, semi-autonomous institutions maintained by the local authorities or the central government. On one hand the Act has completed the restriction on the teachers' professional autonomy. It has taken away their freedom concerning what is taught and how it is taught. This process of restriction was begun during the strike in the early 1980s. It has, however, released the teachers from the governing body of the LEA and its administrators (Maclure, 1989).

The central theme of the Act is "consumer choice." In reality, it has become parental choice of the school for their child. Through the implementation of the National Curriculum and national assessment, the consumers (parents) are to be furnished with information that will compare one school to another. This data gives parents a basis upon which to make their choice at

the local school level. They now can compare the schools within their LEA and choose which one meets their child's particular needs. Moreover, Maclure (1989) has identified four themes that permeate the National Curriculum. These motifs compliment the idea of consumer choice expressed by the Act. These themes are:

1) competition between schools for pupils;
2) the increased role of parents in the governance of the board of governors;
3) tension between 'parent power' and the providers, namely the local authorities and the Church; and
4) the impact on planning of the change in the distribution of power. (p. x)

The results of the students' assessments could become a crucial factor in determining the fate of schools within a given geographic area. An initial concern of the government was that the curriculum should not be test driven as it is in many of the states in the United States. In an attempt to guard against that taking place, the government developed a Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT).

Maclure's themes indicated that the motive for the Act is derived from the attainment targets and the

testing of pupils. According to the guidelines of the Act, the publication of the school's composite scores will give parents the opportunity to become consumers for their child's education. This score is the vehicle that the National Curriculum has created to encourage parental comparison of schools. They can judge the effectiveness of various schools in the education of students. The competitive nature of the curriculum will force schools to pay greater attention to public relations. They will become more responsive to parental concerns. Schools will, in effect, have to be marketed. This will not only include the visible admissions procedures, but also the internal organization and policies of the school, the discipline methods, and curriculum policies (Maclure, 1989). This concept forms the basis for the Act's consumer-based educational model.

It is the intent of the Act to achieve a uniformity of testing to assist the parent/consumer in his/her choice process. This then, is the key to the 1988 Act (McLean, 1989; Maclure, 1989).

Local authorities are beginning to voice concern as the market forces are beginning to take effect. When the market forces of the Act are fully developed, they could dictate which schools will survive and which will

close. Since student enrollment will influence school funding, those schools which are popular and actively recruit students will receive more resources for their operation. Conceivably, this process will result in the decline of the smaller neighborhood schools. In addition, it will create havoc as the LEAs attempt to reorganize their resources and foster the development of larger schools.

Furthermore, the central government is attempting to work its influence in the actual content of the curriculum. An example of this may be found in a recent report from the group that developed the report on the history curriculum. The Prime Minister and Education Secretary MacGregor expressed dissatisfaction with the report. Their objection came despite the groups' attempt to give British History a central role. The group that developed the report consistently resisted the government's attempt to pressure them into placing emphasis on specific historical knowledge such as dates, events, and people. Mr. MacGregor was selected to explain the government's objections to the report. During his explanation, he used his influence to have the report altered to reflect the government's position (Nash & Darking, 30 March 1990).

This entire process is sure to meet with opposition from the teaching professionals. The primary question is, "Who will have the most influence?" If the government employs "high-handed tactics" to secure their point of view, resistance to the Act is sure to mount (Nash & Darking, 30 March 1990).

Finally, Maclean (1989) has speculated that the real push for the development of the National Curriculum is linked towards the European unification movement. As this process moves forward to 1992, the realization that a migration of labor across the continent is beginning to appear:

> This [migration] will require acceptance of qualifications across national boundaries which will lead to a commonality of educational characteristics. A National Curriculum is almost standard throughout the rest of the European community. With the centralized feature of the National Curriculum, the British government can now make commitments on educational policy harmonization. More crucially, the national government has gained the power to prescribe the content of the curriculum, which will also allow it in the future to reach pan-European agreement on pan-European curriculum content. This is an

essential step toward harmonization of qualifications and easy movement of teachers and students across the European Community. (McLean, 1989, p. 241)

Assessment of Students

The Act divides the entire school experience into four key stages. These key stages begin at age 5 and continue until age 7, from 7+ until 11, from 11+ until 14, and from 14+ until 16. The Act specifies that as a child progresses in his/her education, he/she must be assessed after each key stage. This assessment is to be according to the various curriculum goals or attainment targets established in the Act. As envisioned, the scores the individual student obtains on the assessment are only to be shared only his/her parent(s) and teacher. A composite, however, for the entire school will be made available to the public.

The TGAT report envisaged an assessment system that included teacher observation, standard assessment tasks, and other tests to determine student achievement. The primary thrust was to develop a composite profile of the individual student which would include his/her strengths and areas for improvement.

The use of the attainment targets (ten per subject area) is related to the various areas of the National British Education

Curriculum. It is designed so that two years of learning represent one level of progress. It was determined that at age 7, 80% of the students would achieve levels 1, 2, and 3. At age 11, 80% of the pupils would achieve levels 3 through 5; at age 14, 80% would achieve levels 4 through 7; and by age 16, levels 7 through 10 would be achieved by all the students.

Advocates of the National Curriculum are advocating that students should be given the assessment during their final year in a school. This places an assessment in the middle of the middle school experience--age 11. A controversy is developing as to the educational level best suited to working with adolescents after the scores are received. The advocates support students moving to the comprehensive secondary schools while middle level educators contend that their schools are most appropriate.

In addition, TGAT suggested that the individual pupil's report be made available only to the pupil, his/her parent(s), and the pupil's teacher. TGAT also recommended that the testing should begin at age 7. By starting the testing program at this age, underachievers will be identified early in their school careers (Maclure, 1989).

The national government accepted the report of TGAT. However, they modified it to place emphasis on the testing procedure over the assessment given by the student's teacher. This process is currently underway in the United Kingdom. The curriculum and all that it entails is mandatory in all funded schools. The amount of time required for the schools to implement the entire National Curriculum has been estimated to be between 75 to 85% of the school day. However, this is above and beyond any religious education. Realistically, estimates have placed these percentages at or approaching 95% or higher after full implementation has occurred (Bate, 1990). Therefore, it is apparent that after full implementation, mandated religious education will be forced to a lesser status so schools can comply with the Act.

An important component of the assessment program is the procedure employed in the standardized testing program. Whenever this process is discussed and especially when the pressures of performance become directly related to financial support from the government (schools which show a good performance will attract a greater number of students, thus have more funds) the question of how to report the progress of students with special needs arises. These students are

those who have had individualized educational programs (statements) prescribed for them. Programs for students with "statements" are provided by either the local school or the LEA depending on the exceptionality involved.

However, in the competitive consumer-oriented arena of the National Curriculum, Maclure (1989) has speculated that children who are slow learners will find themselves being referred for exceptional placement. Students who are awaiting or are in special programs are not included in the school's composite. This increase in referrals will place more students in line for assistance than the system can adequately handle. The educators are concerned that those students who have learning difficulties will find the process for acceptance slowed because of over-referrals. In addition it will serve to homogenize school populations since only those students who score well will have their test scores reported in the school's composite. According to Sherratt (30 March 1990) the primary concern among educators in Great Britain is that parents will be expecting their child's school to do well in the assessment process. If the school does not perform up to parental expectations for any reason, they will exercise their prerogatives under the law. These rights

include becoming political, i. e. running for election to the school's board of governors, or transferring their child to another school (Sherratt, 30 March 1990).

Funding

The section of the Act which deals with the funding of the schools is known as the Local Management of Schools (LMS). This portion of the Act poses a unique dilemma for the schools in the United Kingdom.

The funding formula that was introduced during the spring of 1990 assumed that the staffing situation of every school was an educational cross section of the country. In fact, the seniority pattern in staffs varies widely. Schools with mature staffs may be obliged to cut down on their provision of books, paper, and other necessities to meet payrolls. Schools with younger staffs will have sufficient funds to supply their classrooms. This occurs because younger teachers receive less pay since they have fewer years of service (Burrows, 30 March 1990).

The concern on the staffing problem of various schools is that the way in which the staff works and interacts with the children is closely linked to the school's effectiveness. This may also be interpreted as added money to the school as more parents decide to send their children to the "quality" schools (Sherratt, 30

March 1990). With this linkage in place, it becomes imperative that the schools develop practical ways to have a working partnership with their children's parents.

A prime directive of LMS was to give the governors and the head teachers (the building administrators) more control over their buildings (Burrows, 30 March 1990). The Act has given the governors complete control over the budget, staffing, appointments, dismissals, curriculum, and other policy areas that had previously been administered by the LEAs. The newly-found power of the governors has placed the head teacher in the role of the on-site budget administrator for the board. In addition to this task, he/she must also maintain the day-to-day operations of the school (Petch, 30 March 1990). The idea behind this move is to empower the head teachers and the local boards. The contention is that with this authority these individuals can identify the school's needs, be flexible in determining its priorities, and respond quickly. The spending of the money, however, must be spelled out quite specifically. Under this plan, the individual school--head teacher and board of governors--can now be held accountable for the expenditures of resources (St. Peter's College, Oxford University, 24 March 1990).

The task of distributing the funds received from the central government rests with the LEAs. It is their duty to distribute the funds to both the primary and secondary schools (only those of 200 or more students). To do this, a weighted formula has been developed. It is based on the number of pupils and "...any other factors affecting the needs of individual schools which are subject to variation from school to school" (House of Parliament, 1988, Section 38, 3, b).

This concept of a single formula is central to the strategy and ideology which underlies the entire Act. It is based on an average teacher's salary, not upon the actual costs of instruction within each school. Therefore, a school that is popular with many of the students can still find itself in financial difficulty. This can happen if a school's staffing profile has a high number of experienced teachers at the top of the salary scale (Bate, 1990). In effect, it virtually eliminates the power of the LEAs to intervene for one school over another.

This money is placed at the disposal then of the local boards of governors. In taking responsibility for spending the school's budget, the governors are duty bound to ensure that the National Curriculum is followed. In most cases this responsibility is passed

on to the head teachers of the schools. Most of these individuals view this as a freedom which they have not previously enjoyed. Others view the funding scheme as an intrusion into their function as the educational leader of their schools (St. Peter's College, Oxford University, 24 March 1990).

The local authorities remain the employers of the teachers in the schools. All appointments, however, are made by the governors. More than 70% of an entire school's budget is devoted to both teaching and non-teaching salaries and fringe benefits. The success or failure of a school now rests on how the teachers' salaries are handled. If the salaries are handled carelessly, teacher dissatisfaction may occur. This, in turn, may have an effect on the classroom performance of some teachers. The students in their classes may find themselves less prepared for the national assessment. It will be the decision of the local boards of governors to determine how many teachers to employ and in what areas they are to be employed. In addition they will also have the power to dismiss any staff member if necessary and to distribute incentive allowances within the established limits (Maclure, 1989).

As with many formula funding approaches in education, funding for repairs and maintenance to the

exterior of the buildings is likely to be inadequate. The LEAs and county councils have resisted turning these areas over to the local boards of governors. They have determined that they are the landlords of the buildings. As such, they accept the financial responsibility for maintaining the buildings (Burrows, 30 March 1990).

# Chapter 3

## Middle School Visits

The first schools visited were located within the city limits of Oxford. These schools included Bayswater Middle School, Temple-Cowley Middle School, and Donnington Middle School. During the second week of the study, schools in the Northamptonshire area were visited. These included Herndon Primary School, King's Cliff Middle School, Oundle Middle School, Ecton Brook Middle School, and Boothville Middle School. In addition, several sessions were observed which were designed to acquaint LEA personnel with the complexities of implementing the National Curriculum. These meetings involved senior inspectors, head teachers, or combinations of both.

### Religious Education/Assemblies

The Education Reform Act of 1988 states that school children must be assembled daily to take part in an act of worship. This act of worship, unless held in a church related school, must not be denominational in nature (Bate, 1990).

In many of the schools which were visited, this assembly occurred in the morning before classes began. During the assembly either the head teacher or members of the school's faculty presented a program that dealt

with values, morals, or self-reflection. In no instance was a religious act of worship observed. When this was discussed with the head teachers they indicated that they did not feel qualified to conduct a religious or worshipful assembly.

These assemblies all followed a similar pattern, i.e. the students were escorted to the assembly hall (usually a gymnasium that doubled as a cafeteria) by their teachers. The students filed into the hall very quietly and were seated. Examples of various assemblies are presented in Appendix A.

The faculties and head teachers in all the schools visited indicated that they attempted to develop weekly themes to be used in their assemblies. Such assemblies provided students with the opportunity to write, develop, perform, or read material appropriate to the stated theme. However, none of the observed assemblies resembled what could be termed a religious observance as stated in the Act.

Affective Education

The area of affective education is referred to as PSE (Personal/Social Education). This was found to be firmly in place in the British middle level schools. The British version of affective education differs slightly from the advisor/advisee programs found in

middle level schools in the United States. The difference is that the British program does not have a set time for the PSE program to take place during the school day. However, like their counterparts in the middle level schools of the United States, they attempt to include affective education throughout the school day.

One professional position that was noticeably missing from the British system was that of a guidance counselor. When the head teachers were questioned about this, they said that PSE is designed to take care of "guidance" type problems. Any problems which cannot be resolved through the PSE component are referred to the head teacher or his/her deputy.

During the first two years in many of the middle schools, the students' individual teachers are responsible for the PSE program (sometimes called pastoral care). However, as the classes become more specialized following the second year in the middle school, the pastoral care becomes less obvious. In most schools, the year coordinator (similar to the position of team leader) is responsible for the pastoral care of the year group. This responsibility is then delegated to the various teachers of each year group. An emphasis has been placed on incentives and rewards for the

students as part of the PSE program. An example of such rewards are the public and private notes of praise that are given to the students.

One feature of several PSE programs was the use of individual student diaries during the first two years. In these schools, all fifth and sixth year students must keep diaries. In addition, the parents are encouraged to write responses to what their child has written in the diary. As the teachers periodically check the diaries an informal line of communication with the parents concerning the child's progress is established.

Students with Special Needs

British schools operate much like their American counterparts in the identification of students with special needs. When a student in the British schools is referred for special services, a team of education professionals begins to develop a Multi-Professional Assessment (MPA). This procedure is utilized to gather information from various support services, to write a summary of the findings, and finally to recommend the actual staffing of the child. If the parent(s) of the child disagree with the report and recommendations of the MPA, they may appeal the decision to the LEA. After hearing the evidence presented, the LEA exercises its authority in making the final determination on the

actual placement. Currently, the entire process, from initial recommendation by the classroom teacher to the actual placement of the child, can take up to one academic year.

Support services for the schools include: educational psychologists, education social workers, and family and children guidance. Funding for these services is provided by the LEAs. In rare instances, the MPA may recommend that a child should be removed from school and placed in a specialized school. These schools exist for students who have behavioral, physical, and/or intellectual problems which cannot adequately be addressed in the regular school setting. The head teachers indicated, however, that these special schools are inadequately funded to meet the needs of their students.

In England, as in the United States, the philosophy of the special programs is to mainstream the students as much as possible. "Pullout" programs are avoided and used only in rare instances. The general practice is for the specialists to work in the schools with the students who have been identified as needing special support. Furthermore, schools receive extra funding for any child who receives these services.

In addition to the concerns associated with students who have learning problems, there are inner-city schools that deal with students experiencing societal problems. Included in this group are homeless students and those who live with their mothers in shelters for battered women. These schools are assisted by social workers who work with the school to insure that such students receive adequate care and education.

There are no mandated programs for children who fall into the category of gifted. Rather, the teachers incorporate these students into their grouping plans. In this way, the gifted students operate with the average and slower learners in a cooperative learning environment. The gifted students are also encouraged to use their imagination in various projects and activities. These are associated with the Craft, Design, and Technology (C, D, & T) portion of the curriculum.

Student Activities

All the schools visited had a variety of activities in which the students could choose to participate. Several of the schools had lunch time football (soccer to the Americans) for the boys and net ball (similar to volleyball) for the girls. Faculty members sponsored these student activities. In one school the head

teacher served as the referee for the lunch time football game.

In addition to the athletic activities, clubs and musical groups also meet during lunch as well as after school. None of the teachers/head teachers who sponsor these activities receive any financial compensation for their time. However, schools may provide these sponsors with a free school lunch (Bate, 1990).

The concept of "houses" within the schools was seen in many instances. In this approach a school is divided into four houses. Each house has an equal representation from the four years participating in each house. Whenever there is a school-wide competition, points are awarded to the various finishers. These points are accumulated by the houses and are calculated weekly. After each term, an award is given to the house which has accumulated the most points. Points are awarded for many activities. Some of these include participation in athletic events, club activities, achievement in school work, effort, and items of "worthy note" (D. Parker, 1990). In this way, each student is given an avenue for earning points according to his/her strengths and abilities.

Student Evaluation/Assessment

Another difference was found between the British system of reporting student progress and that found in the United States. The difference is that no report cards per se are issued in the British schools. In contrast to the numerical or letter grades of the United States, the British use a narrative form to report the child's progress. In addition, the British system is comprised of three twelve week terms (Autumn, Spring, and Summer). These terms are separated by breaks of up to one month in length. Furthermore, each term has a midterm break of approximately one week.

According to the Act, each teacher must write one or two paragraphs about each of his/her student's progress at least once each year. In most of the British schools, however, this practice is done at least twice each year (Bate, 1990). After the teacher has written his/her evaluation, the child then writes a paragraph or two evaluating the work he/she has done during the term. This combined student/teacher report is then sent home to the child's parents. The schools encourage the parents to respond in writing to the report. As this report develops, it becomes a transfer document that is passed on to the teachers of the next form (year).

Recently, objectives for the work being done in the various classes have begun to appear on some schools' assessment forms. This addition has not been mandated by the Act. However, the schools doing this are attempting to keep their parents informed on how the school's curriculum is linked to the National Curriculum.

At the end of the fourth year, the students prepare both a curriculum vita and a final year report. These documents go with the student to the upper school he/she will be attending. The entire concept at work in the British system is based on assessment as a continuing process.

It is an extremely rare occurrence when a student is retained. When this does occur, it is done only with the permission of the parents and the professional staff (head teacher and classroom teachers). In addition, both parties must agree that the student will benefit from the retention.

Currently, assessment is school based. There is, however, a growing concern on the part of several of the LEAs that assessment practices should be standardized. A plan which has been considered revolves around a method to build assessment into the teacher's daily lesson plans. The design calls for the assessment

criteria to become an important part of daily planning and to be broad-based in nature.

This approach to assessment is the called Records of Achievement. In addition to making the assessment criteria uniform, the Records of Achievement approach brings together the school's policies and practices into one document. The teachers are expressing concern that by including these documents a significant amount of their time will be needed to complete the assessment (Northamptonshire LEA [NARA], 30 March 1990). This examination of the assessment process has been viewed as an attempt by several LEAs to be pro-active rather than reactive to the envisioned demands of the National Curriculum (Northamptonshire LEA, 28 March 1990).

As with any change, there are pros and cons involved with the adoption of the Records of Achievement. On the negative side, the Records of Achievement forces the teachers to contend with the time consuming task of completing all of the assessment documents. However, on the positive side of the approach, there appears to be a degree of commonality among the documents. These common features should limit the amount of time necessary for completion (NARA, 30 March 1990).

The most important statement about the Records of Achievement idea is that the self-assessment of pupils is back stronger than ever (St. Peter's College, Oxford University, 24 March 1990). This approach stresses that students must be given time to reflect and review their progress. There is a problem, however, that arises with the narrative approach being advocated. That concern is that some students may not be as well known by the teacher as other students. In such instances, those students who are better known will receive a more informative transfer document than those who are not as well known (St. Peter's College, Oxford University, 24 March 1990).

In addition, it was stressed that not all evidence for assessment must be tangible. Some parts of the assessment may reflect the interactions of the teacher and the students. When these actions are viewed in context, they become evidence for achievement.

This assessment by the teacher of the student's work is more important than a paper and pencil type assessment. Examples of suggested principles for student assessment have been presented to all head teachers. They include the following:

1. assessment will be integral to the overall approach;

2. pupils will achieve on their own level;

3. assessment will not be norm-referenced; and

4. avoid competition and stress. (NARA, 30 March 1990).

Currently, assessment is a process of negotiations between the classroom teacher and the student. During this procedure the teacher spends time discussing which samples of the student's work will be utilized as assessment evidence.

With the introduction of Records of Achievement, however, the assessment process will be changing due to various unforeseen drawbacks. These include inadequate funding so teachers can spend the time to gather all of the required information. Second, class size will become a limiting factor. Teachers with larger classes cannot devote the time to complete the required paper work and negotiations with students for the necessary materials for documentation. Finally, with larger classes the necessary space to house the individual student's evidence to substantiate his/her Record of Achievement becomes difficult to maintain (NARA, 30 March 1990).

Transition In/Transition Out

To assist the students in the transition from the primary school to the middle school, each middle school

has developed a transition program. These programs involve entry year or first year coordinators. These individuals go to the primary schools that have traditionally sent children to their particular middle school. Their function is to discuss the needs of the incoming class with the faculty of the primary schools.

As the year progresses, the middle school's first year coordinator holds sessions to talk to the students who will be moving to the middle school. This is done to address the various concerns students have regarding their move to the middle school. This process, known as "cross-phase liaison," is crucial for the success of the students when they arrive at their new school.

Later in the year, other members of the middle school staff get involved in planning for the incoming students. Programs are designed and information readied for parent and student visitation nights. Throughout many schools, "attachments" are formed for the students who are moving from the first school to the middle school. These may include the primary school utilizing various areas of the middle school during the year for some of their activities. An example of this was seen when the outgoing first school class attended a dress rehearsal of a performance being put on by the middle

school students. Other examples may be seen in each of the schools involved.

Finally, after the students arrive at the middle school, the professional staff, including the year coordinator, reviews the documentation of each incoming student's work. This provides the middle school with an understanding of the progress each student has made in the first school.

Transition out occurs in much the same fashion as transition in. During the autumn term, the upper schools hold "open days." These days are designed to permit middle school students to visit the upper schools in which they are interested. After these visits, the students are then asked to select their first and second choice of school they wish to attend the following year.

During the spring term, the heads of the upper school come to the middle schools to talk to the eighth year students. They outline for them what can be expected during their upper school experience. Early in the summer term the students are notified as to which school they will be attending in the fall. The year coordinators from the upper school then interview each student who will be making the move to their upper school. These interviews are conducted to better acquaint the middle school student with the programs and

courses of study of the upper school. This process is used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the student.

Transition within is also conducted in the schools. As transition in and transition out are designed to assist students adjust to a different building and faculty, transition within is also designed to assist students. However, the goal of transition within is to have the students become acquainted with the faculty and staff in the next form (year) of their school.

Transition in, transition out, and transition within are conducted in each school system. Each system sponsors a "new intake day" during which all students within a system move to their next year's class. On that day the students attend a full day of classes in the building or the next year of their education. Many of the schools conclude the "new intake day" by hosting a parent meeting in the evening. During this meeting, the faculty and staff discuss any concerns that the parents may have about their child's new school and/or year (grade).

Student Discipline

Student discipline as observed in the United Kingdom is very different from that which has been observed in the United States. Most middle school

students show respect and politeness to their teachers, peers, administrators, and visitors. The three major areas of discipline problems in the schools arise from social problems, parental neglect, and/or disrespectful behavior (D. Parker, 1990).

Faculty members are encouraged to handle their own discipline problems. However, if a problem arises that justifies the intervention of another adult, the next person in line is the year coordinator. Following this person, the student may be referred to the deputy head teacher or the head teacher if a serious infraction has occurred.

The teachers in the United Kingdom are not permitted to use corporal punishment on their students. This option was removed as a result of the Elton Report on Discipline in 1986 (Parker, 1990). Methods of punishment which may be utilized include the withdrawal of privileges, keeping a child in the classroom during the morning and/or afternoon breaks (each fifteen minutes in length), placing a child on report, demerits, or, in the case of some severe instances, behavioral contracts. (The behavioral contract is discussed in Appendix B.)

The goal of all the administrators is to have the students become responsible for their actions. All the

head teachers who were visited agreed that the most effective solution for student discipline problems is parental contact. Not only does this avenue assist in solving the problem with the child's behavior, it also serves as a deterrent for future problems.

Student suspension from school is viewed as the "final sanction" and is rarely used (Bate, 1990). The reason it is rare is because to be implemented, it has to be approved by the chair person of the board of governors for the particular school.

School rules and classroom rules were not evident. The students were informed of the rules by the classroom teacher and through the school's brochure. In one instance, however, classroom rules were posted (see Appendix B).

The most continuing discipline problem was that of "bullying." This term applies when one child makes life miserable for another. One of the schools used this term as the theme for their weekly assembly (D. Parker, 1990) (see Appendix B).

Instructional Techniques

Middle school buildings in Great Britain fall into two design categories. The first of these is the "purpose built" school. These schools are specifically built to house the middle school program. The second

category is those schools that conduct their classes in a school that was originally designed as either a primary or upper school.

In the "purpose built" schools, the general design lends itself well to the middle level concept of team teaching. The schools are built on the design of a "school within a school." In this pattern, each form (grade) is assigned to a specific area of the building. Within that area are four classrooms which open onto a large area that has computers, books, tables, and other necessary equipment. This area is designed for the building of projects, various types of small group teaching, and as a place for students and teachers to interact on the topic being studied. The subject specialist areas of these schools are centrally located and easily accessible for all classes.

Those schools which have been converted from either primary or upper schools attempt to utilize the same concepts as those which have been "purpose built." However, as in similar schools in the United States, the facility design inhibits the development of team closeness. In addition, the ability to mix the various groups within a form or grade level is also limited.

In either case, the methods of instruction are similar. Usually during the first two years of middle

school, the students are in a self-contained environment. The specialists (science teachers, craft teachers to name just two) who teach in the upper two years conduct several classes per term for these students. This produces a twofold benefit for the subject specialists. First, they get to generate an interest in their subject through their presentations. Second, the students develop a degree of familiarity with the specialists who teach some of the subjects in the third and fourth years.

The first year of the middle school has a format similar to the primary schools the students previously attended. According to the head teachers, it is during the second and third years that a true middle school feeling develops. It is in these two middle years that the students make their break from the self-contained approach to embark on the experiences that develop their creativity. One course that addresses the students' creativity is the Crafts, Design, and Technology (C, D, and T) course. This course has been made a requirement under the National Curriculum. Another course which develops creativity and also employs the concept of topic teaching is the humanities course. Each year, however, the program becomes more departmentalized until the fourth year. During the fourth year, the middle

school program becomes the most departmentalized. This serves to prepare the students for the secondary schools.

The topic teaching approach closely resembles the interdisciplinary method used by many of the middle level schools in the United States. There are, however, several differences between English topic teaching and the American interdisciplinary approach. One of these differences is that the "topic" is carried through all the subjects.

A second difference between the two methods of teaching is that the British approach has very limited "formal teaching" (lecture method). This lack of "formal teaching" is based on the philosophy that topic teaching is most effective with a minimum amount of teacher involvement. Lectures are presented to inform students of procedures to be followed rather than to dispense information.

A frequently observed approach to topic teaching had the students revolve from teacher to teacher four times per year. In this way the students were exposed to four different topics taught by a topic specialist. Regardless of the mechanics employed for topic teaching, the teachers are united in their objection to a specific textbook for their subject. It is their contention that

textbooks are "too prescriptive" (Donnington Middle School, 21 March 1990). The classrooms and libraries contain collections of texts and reference materials for the students to utilize as they work on the various topics.

As the students work on their topics, they develop a "book." This book includes the work the student has completed on the topic. During the development of this book, the teachers constantly stress that the students do their best possible work (poorly written work is returned to the students to be done again). In addition, both teachers and students are encouraged to be creative in their approach and design of the topic subject. The premise of this approach is that everyone and every subject has an integral part in the overall topic being studied. An example of a thematic topic is found in Appendix C.

Students are grouped heterogeneously for instruction during their four years in the middle school. The rationale for this method of grouping is to blend the students as they enter from the various primary schools. These groups once established, however, usually remain in tact throughout the students' stay at the middle school. Any changes that take place are done at the request and direction of the teachers.

The only exception to the heterogeneous grouping patterns takes place in mathematics. Several of the schools regroup their students to provide some fourth year (final year in the middle school) students an opportunity to study more advanced mathematical concepts.

The overall feeling and design of the middle school classrooms is best described as flexible. The schools make use of both vertical and horizontal teaming of their teachers. The vertical teaming utilizes the specialists. These individuals teach their subject across the years of the middle school. (An example of a science class is presented in Appendix D.) Horizontal teaming occurs under the direction of the form tutor (team leader). This person coordinates the activities of the teachers in a given form.

Multi-Cultural Education: A Look at Two Schools

As mentioned in the "Preface," the thought of British middle schools being multi-cultural was not given much consideration at the outset of this study. However, upon entering one school in particular, the Donnington Middle School in Oxford, this view was altered immediately.

This school can be compared to an American inner-city school with all of its diverse racial and

ethnic students. The sign on the Office door had various symbols directly under it. These symbols represented the word "office" in three different languages from southeast Asia. In addition, similar symbols were also located on the doors of other areas to which parents may need to have access, including the head teacher's office and the parents' room.

One-third of the 380 students who attend this school were Muslim. Within this school, seven different languages and fourteen different religions were represented. To assist with the language barriers, one person was employed to teach English as a second language. In reality, English was most likely a third or fourth language for many of these students. In addition, the school paid individuals to assist foreign students so they could function more successfully in their new surroundings.

As part of the outreach of this school, language instruction and cultural instruction were held after school hours. Students and parents attended these sessions which were held in both Punjabi and Pakistani. These classes were designed to keep alive the various traditions in these two cultures.

In a school such as this the impact of the National Curriculum's assessment can best be observed. The

students who attended this school were not as affluent as those from other schools. Many of their parents could neither speak nor write English. Some parents viewed the variety of ethnic backgrounds as a disadvantage to their child's education. The posting of this school's composite assessment scores could have a devastating effect on student enrollment. Such an effect would translate into a lack of available funds for the coming year.

However, the head teacher, professional, and non-professional staff of this school have turned what appeared to be a liability into an asset. In their humanities classes, they have begun a comparative study of the various religious festivals practiced by their students. These festivals are compared to those of the Anglican Church.

One of the major problems this school encounters in dealing with the various cultures has been the high turnover rate of the students. Many of the families are recent immigrants who are looking for permanent housing and employment. These two aspects combine to frustrate the teachers. Just as progress is beginning to be made with a student, he/she moves out of the attendance area.

A second multi-cultural middle school was observed in Northamptonshire. This school had been newly

renovated and had a female head teacher (the only woman observed in a headship in a middle school). She mentioned many of the same concerns as found in the Oxford school. Thirty percent of this school's population, however, was comprised of students from Bangladesh. This fact alone did not add to any problems associated with multi-cultural education. However, she expressed the same concerns as the Oxford head teacher.

The Teaching Staff

The teachers in the United Kingdom work more days per year than many of their counterparts in the United States. In the United Kingdom teacher contracts are established on a 190 day school year. This equates to 1,265 hours per year (six hours and forty minutes per day). Although the contract year is slightly longer than those seen in most school systems in the United States, the British schools usually continue until the end of July. This extra length comes about through vacations at midterm and at the end of each term (Autumn, Spring, and Summer). The school day for the English middle school teacher is shorter in length than those experienced in most American middle schools. The day in the English system usually begins at 9:00 AM and lasts until 3:40 PM.

A lasting effect of the government's handling of the teachers' strike in the early 1980s has been the absence of salary negotiations. The salaries of all education professionals are established through the central government's Interim Advisory Committee. The salary range for teachers during the 1989/1990 academic year was 9500 - 15,000 pounds (approximately $15,200 - $24,000 depending on degrees held and years of experience). These salaries are usually adjusted for inflation each year.

Teachers can enhance their salaries by accepting extra duties (e.g., year coordinator, subject coordinator) for which they receive government-mandated stipends. However, the reality of the situation is that individuals receive the stipend only if the schools can afford them (Bate, 1990). Sponsorship of musical and athletic activities, clubs, and evening programs is done voluntarily.

Teacher education/training in Great Britain has traditionally been obtained by completing a three year teacher training program--a Bachelor of Science or a Bachelor of Arts degree. This must be followed by an additional year of post graduate studies in education. Without this additional year, an individual is limited to teaching only in the British non-maintained schools.

A second way to obtain a teaching certificate is through the completion of a four year Bachelor of Education program (Bate, 1990).

Currently, however, in response to a shortage of teachers, the United Kingdom is developing alternative methods for teacher certification. The current approach used by the government is the granting of a "license to teach." This license may be given to individuals who have business or industrial backgrounds. They receive their teacher training on the job.

However, in both the traditional and alternative certification route there is a limited amount of course work that is specific to the middle grades. The majority of the certificated/licensed teachers have either primary or secondary credentials. Programs designed for individuals to teach in the middle grades are obtained through participation in either the local school or LEA in-service programs.

Formal evaluation of the teaching staff is extremely rare. Currently, the only method is through the visit of the LEA inspectors. These inspectors conduct a visit to the school (approximately one week in length). During that week the entire functioning of the school is examined. Upon returning to the LEA office they write a report based on their findings.

As the National Curriculum becomes fully implemented, pressure is mounting to establish uniform teacher evaluation procedures. These procedures are being developed through meetings at the senior inspector level. It is their intent to develop a document that can be "pulled off the shelf" and employed for teacher appraisal. The method to conduct this, however, does not need to be limited to a paper and pencil assessment. This group has been working to develop the framework for such a document so pilot projects can begin during the 1990/1991 academic year (Senior Inspectors, Northamptonshire LEA, 26 March 1990).

One concern voiced about the appraisal process includes the development of a job description for the appraiser. It has been suggested that this job description should be a pre-component of the entire process. Another concern about appraisal is that job descriptions for the teachers are non-existent.

However, as the costs associated with the development and implementation of an appraisal system have begun to be realized, the British government is withdrawing its insistence for a national appraisal. The development of appraisal procedures has now been given to the LEAs if they want to pursue the topic (Bate, 1990).

A final concern of the appraisal process is for the overall principle and weight it will have throughout the education community. This acceptance could differ depending on how the local teacher unions perceive it. The overall goal however, is to raise the general level of awareness of the teaching staff toward the National Curriculum. (Senior Inspectors, Northamptonshire LEA, 26 March 1990)

Several LEAs have continued with the assessment concept. They have encouraged individual schools to develop their own procedures. One school that was experimenting with the assessment of faculty stated in their initial design that eight appraisals would take place within a single school year. However, in actual practice, the maximum number which could be done was only four. According to their plan, the teachers were given the option of who did their assessment--the head teacher or one of the two deputies.

The Head Teacher's Role and LMS

The role of the head teacher has dramatically changed as a result of the guidelines of the National Curriculum. As the name implies, these are teachers who serve as the heads of their respective schools. Before the National Curriculum, most of the heads had a teaching assignment in addition to their role as the

administrator for the school. Under the Act's Local Management of Schools (LMS), these individuals now have the responsibility for the expenditure of their school's funds. These expenditures include all costs related to operating the school. This includes paying the utilities in additin to the salaries of the professional and non-professional staffs.

The head teachers do not actually write the checks for the payment of these expenditures--that function remains with LEA office. The head must, however, keep an accurate account of what has been paid and the amount of money available. As this perspective of financial management is gradually assumed by the head teachers, it will require them to spend significantly more time in the administration and bookkeeping function of the school. This will leave them less time to be involved with teaching.

The fiscal responsibility under the local management of schools is being phased in gradually, however. Phase one began April 1, 1990, the start of the fiscal year in British schools. During this first year of implementation, the individual schools will receive 20 per cent of their budget from the LMS formula. The central government will provide 80 percent of the operating budget. This total budget is called

the "benchmark budget." This formula is based on age-weighted pupil units (AWPU).

For the next four years, the local schools will be increasing the amount of their budget contribution from the formula by an additional 20 percent. This will occur as the government withdraws its contribution by 20 percent per year. At the beginning of fiscal year 1994, each school's board of governors and head teacher will be in complete fiscal control of the school's operation. The formula concept of LMS will then be fully installed.

In working with the allocated funds, the middle school head teachers are caught in the "middle" (Bate, 1990). The funding of education in Great Britain is on two levels--a primary level up to age eleven and a secondary level from age eleven to age eighteen. There is no specific funding level for middle school students. Rather, the middle school students are considered in the same category as secondary school students. This means that the schools receive more money per student than the primary schools.

Concern over the funding formula has been raised by head teachers as they project the implementation of LMS in their middle schools (NARA, 30 March 1990). Many of the schools employ teachers who are either at the top or near the top of the government's salary schedule. These

salaries have been carried along with the more expensive middle school program. However, since funding LMS is based on the average salary, many head teachers will have to decide between salaries and enhancements for their schools. Examples of these enhancements include such as items as computers and library materials.

Parental Selection of Schools

Concern has been raised by the heads and deputies over the increased pressure that has been placed on their schools because of the National Curriculum's attainment targets (NARA, 30 March 1990). As stipulated in the Act, a composite of each school's attainment target scores will be made public. In keeping with the government's idea of parents as consumers, the parents can select the school their child attends.

Anxiety has been expressed about that the assessment of the attainment targets will be culturally biased. An example of this anxiety was found in an inner-city school in Oxford (Donnington Middle School, 21 March 1990). Teachers in the inner-city schools have learned to work across and through the many cultural barriers that exist. Many of the students who attend these schools are from a variety of national backgrounds. Past educational experience indicates that

these students will not score as high on the assessment as students in a more ethnically homogeneous school.

If the assessment instrument is ethnically biased, the lower scores obtained by non-British students in inner-city schools may alarm many of the British parents whose children attend these schools. These lower scores could lead to a significant number of parents of British students withdrawing their children from these schools. Under the Act, they will be permitted to attempt to enroll them in a school that has higher composite scores.

The consumer side of the Act rewards schools with a higher composite student assessment. The educational funding is based on the number of students who are enrolled. Therefore, it becomes clear that schools which score well on the assessment will enlarge their enrollments. With the increased enrollments will also come an increase in their available funds. Conversely, schools that do not fare as well on the assessment will not only lose students, but will also lose the necessary funding to improve their offerings. As this situation develops, head teachers from schools with low composite scores will find it increasingly difficult to provide yearly stipends due to reduced funding. Speculation is

that schools which are consistently low in their scores may eventually be suffocated due to a lack of funding.

Another important factor in the process of parent selection of a school is the "state of the building." These words take on many different and complex meanings when examined carefully. One interpretation of this phrase refers to the physical appearance of the building, i.e. the building's state of repair. A second interpretation is linked to whether or not the school requires the students to wear uniforms. This is based on tradition, the philosophy of the professional staff, the parents ability to provide one, or any combination of these factors. The third and final meaning which is attributed to this phrase deals with the ethnic makeup of the school. Some parents subscribe to the belief that a multicultural approach is to be regarded as an asset to their child's education while others view this as a hindrance.

Under the guidelines of the Act, parents are to select the school they want their children to attend. When first choices cannot be honored because of over enrollment, second choices are honored. If parents elect not to choose a school, the LEA will assign their child to a school. This provision of parental choice

could lead to schools becoming elitist and homogeneous in their ethnic appearance.

The Boards of Governors

An unusual idea to the American observer was that of the Board of Governors. Unlike most schools in the United States where a board of directors oversees an entire school system, the English system has a board of governors for each school. This board is comprised of popularly elected representatives from the public as well as representatives from the school's faculty. The head teacher is, by nature of his/her position, a member of the board. A common mix on the board would include: four individuals to serve as parent representatives; two representatives from the teaching ranks selected by their peers; and the head teacher of the school.

Under LMS, each board of governors is directly responsible for overseeing both the educational program and the expenditure of funds for operating the school. The only areas that do not come under the financial jurisdiction of the school's board of governors are repairs to the outside of the building, repairs to the heating equipment, and replacement of heating equipment. These items remain the domain of the LEA.

Many boards are beginning to examine the middle school programs closely due to the increased costs

involved in operating a middle school. One solution the boards are examining carefully is consolidating existing schools and building larger ones. This action would increase the number of students per building (currently about 450) to 900 or more. The result of such moves would give the boards more capital to run their schools.

The measure of accountability for how each board operates its school is established by law. This process states that each school's board must make an annual report to the parents whose students attend their school. This is done through a public meeting that must be advertised in the local media. However, this meeting usually has sparse attendance. Head teachers speculate that the reasons behind this low attendance are that either the parents are satisfied with the program their children receive or that the parents are apathetic toward their child's education (NARA, 30 March 1990).

This poor attendance may slowly become an item of the past, however. Throughout the country there exists a renewed parental concern about education which has been attributed to the anti-teacher approach of the central government (NARA, 30 March 1990). This feeling has its roots in the teacher job action which occurred during the early part of the 1980s. Since that time, there has been a general feeling among the education

professionals that a lack of parental support is emerging. This feeling is attributed to education since it has been on the receiving end of some negative press. Several head teachers commented that parents were beginning to disagree more openly with the teaching staff and the overall educational process (NARA, 30 March 1990).

In addition to the boards of governors being overseers of a school's finances, they also are involved in the development of disciplinary rules for the schools. The rules for the individual schools are arrived at through meetings with the board, the head teacher, and representatives from the teaching staffs of each school. Head teachers believe in staff input in the design of the school's rules. They feel that this is one method to instill a feeling of ownership within the staff. This in turn should assist in the overall discipline atmosphere of the school.

Parental Involvement

Unlike the United States, parental involvement in the schools of the United Kingdom is mandated by law. The first part of this mandate includes parental participation on the board of governors. The second part requires the parents to attend the meeting of the board when it makes its annual report.

A third mandate for parental involvement is to attend a series of meetings designed to explain the National Curriculum and all of its aspects. These meetings focus on each area of the National Curriculum and the plans the school has for implementation. However, in reality, fewer than twenty percent of the parents attend any of these mandated meetings (St. Peter's College, Oxford University, 24 March 1990).

Parental meetings which attract a significantly higher percentage of attendance are those which are designed to discuss student progress. In addition, many of the middle level schools have a parent organization. Some of these parent groups are affiliated with national or international associations such as the Parent Teachers Association (PTA). Still other parent groups are loosely organized and meet either monthly or once each term with the head teacher and several other teachers. These meetings usually focus on one aspect of the school per meeting (for example activities, drama, or National Curriculum attainment targets).

Parent organizations in the United Kingdom are similar to their those in the United States. They do not serve as volunteer groups for the school working as library aides or assisting teachers in correcting homework. Their function is best described as fund

raising. Through their efforts various pieces of equipment are purchased which have been cut from the school's operating budget. Projects that are used to raise this money might include such events as barn dances or barbecues. The additional money raised from these events is used to supplement the educational program. A consensus of several head teachers indicated that these funds should not be used for "necessities" in their schools. It is their belief that these necessary items must be provided through the budget (St. Peter's College, Oxford University, 24 March 1990).

There is agreement among the head teachers that no single reason exists why parents become involved in their child's education/school. Reasons given for involvement include the adult/student social activities, the parent's willingness to assist his/her child's school acquire added materials, and an attempt to influence the school's board of governors (St. Peter's College, Oxford University, 24 March 1990).

All the schools invite parents to attend school functions and to travel along on field trips. However, when parents are utilized as chaperones they are used solely as an extra pair of hands and eyes. It is the teachers and heads who are responsible for the children's safety. Overall, the work the schools do

with parents is viewed as a way to develop and constantly improve upon their public image.

Summary

The middle schools which were visited varied in their physical appearance. This variance was from the 1950s converted style of the Donnington Middle School to the "purpose built" schools of Boothville and Oundle. In all cases, however, the professional staffs were concerned about their students.

As an American observer, I found it unusual that students had to participate in a daily act of worship. So often we forget that the separation of church and state is unique to our system. However, unless the school receives some support from the church, the administrators did not perform religious services.

In the area of affective education, the British have achieved what we in the United States strive for, i.e. affective education that permeates the entire school day. In many of our middle schools, approximately fifteen minutes are devoted to this topic each day. Unfortunately, the remainder of the time our students are in school bears little resemblance to affective education. The professional staffs in the British middle schools were more positive in their dealings with the students than many of their American

counterparts. This supports their contention that affective education is continuous throughout their day.

The student activities which were observed helped to underscore the need students this age have for physical activity. During their one hour lunch period, the majority of the students were actively involved in some form of activity. It proved to be a welcome break in the middle of the day. In addition, each morning around ten o'clock and each afternoon around two o'clock, the students and teachers had a fifteen minute break (tea time for the faculty). Some of the students went outside to run around while others stayed inside and talked freely with their friends. Once again, this break underscores schools which acknowledge the needs of the students to move around.

Of all the various components which were observed, none are more striking, however, than the methods of reporting student progress and the thematic approach to teaching. The progress reports focused on the student's work in the class. It was a time for the student to pay careful thought to his/her achievement in the class. In addition, the report written by the teacher reflected on the student's academic and non-academic performance. This was done without any use of grades.

The rapport established between the student and the teacher as they compared their evaluations opened the way for discussion of the student's strengths and weaknesses. The fear that can be associated with grades in the United States was not evident in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, by encouraging the parents to respond in writing to the report, the schools have made a significant attempt to involve all parties. Conversations with both teachers and head teachers indicated that the overall feeling towards the reporting process was very positive.

The observed thematic approach to teaching was interdisciplinary teaching at its finest. In the United States, interdisciplinary teaching is generally little more than a common planning time for teachers of the four academic areas. A second approach used in the United States may take the form of a research project for social studies that is graded for grammar by the language arts teacher.

Thematic teaching in Great Britain has every teacher teaching his/her subject based around a central theme. The students are placed in groups of three or four. They are informed by their teachers about the materials to be used in their study. The absence of a one textbook approach in this study was immediately

evident. The students are given assignments which must be researched in their classroom or school library. Their finished work is placed in a book which the students make as they progress in their study of the theme. This approach is noteworthy and needs to be studied further for implementation into American middle level schools.

Finally, the British view on student retention is highly commendable. Head teachers indicated in conversations that they were not accustomed to dealing with the subject of retention. As one head teacher told me, "It has not happened in my sixteen years in this school (Bate, 1990)."

Even though the British system is currently devoid of graded report cards, the students I observed were interested in doing their best. The British students constantly strive to achieve to the best of their ability. This aspect may have its roots in two areas of the system. The first of these is the way in which PSE functions in the schools. Faculty members show genuine concern for their students. They talk to the students as they pass in the halls and work with them in small groups during class. They interact with the students in a variety of settings outside the classroom as well. Examples of this are seen in various games, clubs, and

musical activities at lunch time and after school. In addition, student assessment provides still another approach for student/teacher interaction. The discussions which take place during this time are centered around encouraging the student to do his/her best.

The second area is the size of the British middle schools. In no instance did any of the schools visited house more than 450 students--city as well as rural. Each of the schools could be described as a neighborhood school. The students who attended knew each other and have gone to school with each other for many years.

This small numerical size (by American standards) produces the feeling of family within the students and the professional staff. The staff knows the names of the students who attend the school. The very size of the school means that students and staff are constantly interacting with each other.

# Chapter 4

## Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Although the systems developed independently of each other, there are many similarities between middle level education in the United Kingdom and the United States. In both countries, importance has been placed on how the middle level students develop differently from their counterparts at the elementary and high school levels. These countries have placed a premium on the development of courses that permit their students to expand their horizons. Additionally, both countries have encouraged the development of interdisciplinary teaching for the middle school student. This has been done in an attempt to create a relevance for the material being presented.

However, both countries are currently in the process of having legislation interfere with the delivery of middle level programs. In the United States, various state legislatures have passed and continue to pass bills to limit the students. Examples of this include limitations of time for exploratory courses, regulation on the time allowed for extracurricular activities, and dictating a curriculum that does not address the cognitive development of the early adolescent.

England on the other hand is in the middle of a major revamping of its entire educational system. The passage of the National Curriculum has already had an adverse effect on education. This effect is visible through the emphasis on "parents as consumers" of education. In addition, as the National Curriculum becomes fully implemented, the interest in the evaluation of students and the meeting of attainment targets becomes more critical. Many head teachers are becoming anxious that the overall effect of the National Curriculum will be a move toward American-style accountability. This would lead to more frequent assessments of students. In addition, for those students who do not reach the various attainment targets, retention may become an accepted practice. Currently, retention is the exception.

This impact on middle level education is felt by head teachers, classroom teachers, students, and parents. It occurs in the curricular realm through establishing the attainment targets for the various subjects areas. Although the outward appearance of these targets is benign, the net effect of posting a school's composite scores will have far-reaching effects.

The most devastating affect this practice will have will be seen when the parents withdraw their children from schools that post low scores. Schools that have a high percentage of minority students may experience a decline in enrollment. This will occur as parents withdraw their children to have them attend schools which attain higher scores. School funding under the National Curriculum is based on student enrollment. The reality is that the schools most in need of additional funding will actually lose funding due to the flight of some of their students.

The inner-city schools that have a high percentage of non-English children are those that need and will continue to need additional funding--not a reduction. However, if their enrollments drop, these schools will find themselves less able to compete for the better students. As the spiral continues, these schools may eventually be forced to close due to a lack of operating capital.

Affluent schools, however, will continue to do well. Many of their students are white middle class students from traditionally British homes. The parents of these students already have demonstrated their support for the National Curriculum and all that it embodies.

The problem faced by schools through the decline in enrollment can be called "Educational Darwinism"--the survival of the fittest. The schools which do well in meeting the attainment targets will see their attendance registers swell. Those schools who post low composite scores, however, may see their brightest students leave. This leaves little room for the children of immigrant parents and those whose parents cannot afford to move to better schools. They will be left to receive either an inferior education or, if there are not enough students to warrant a school, no education at all.

A related area that was viewed as a major obstacle to the middle level concept in the United Kingdom was the new funding formula of the National Curriculum. As mentioned before, this formula links the school's funding to its enrollment, not its need. In the preceding discussion, the linkage between attainment targets, a school's composite score, and funding were examined. However, every middle school faces a dilemma as the funding formula begins to take effect.

The problem with the formula funding procedure is that the middle school programs are significantly more expensive to operate. This is especially true during the first two years of the middle school experience.

Attempts are being made to maintain the existing programs in the middle schools at all grade levels.

One of these plans has some of the LEAs taking a closer look at the property on which the schools are located. In some instances, these properties are located on prime real estate. The buildings, however, were constructed during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Many of them are beginning to require more frequent and expensive repairs. In addition, most of these older buildings are no longer mortgaged. The LEAs, therefore, are raising the question of consolidating several smaller schools on land farther from the center of town. The purpose of such a move is to reduce the expenditure of funds on small older buildings by constructing larger physical plants.

This would not only serve to release repair money on the older sites, but it would also eliminate several professional positions. Through the building of larger new schools and the selling of the existing properties, the LEAs envision a large savings and perhaps money in the bank.

However, the move to bigger schools located on the fringes of cities will bring with it varied problems associated with bigness. One of these problems would be the loss of the neighborhood school concept so prevalent

in the existing middle schools. A second area of concern would be the lack of access for many of the inner-city students.

A final area that emerges as a major obstacle for all the British schools is the concept of Local Management of Schools (LMS). At first glance, this notion projects a positive image. The head teachers can now control the spending of the money for their individual schools. They will no longer have to endure the delays involved in obtaining spending approvals from the LEA. It is placing the money at the source of the need.

However, the reality of the situation is that the head teachers are educators, not accountants or business managers. Many of them are classroom teachers for a percentage of each day. Under the guidelines of LMS these individuals will be accountable for the expenditure of funds for their schools. In some instances, depending upon the size of the school, this sum could amount to one million pounds or more (approximately two million dollars). This outlay includes everything that the school purchases and every salary that has to be paid. The only exceptions are repairs to the building and heating system. With such a system in place it will become imperative to implement

detailed accounting procedures which are unfamiliar to most educators.

Recommendations

The British middle schools reflect a cross-section of the overall national scene. This is similar to their counterparts in the United States. The problems of the society in both countries do not lend themselves to the "quick fixes" perceived by many politicians. Education is a multi-faceted entity that needs to be examined carefully before radical legislation is passed to reform it. Included in this overall picture is the issue of multi-cultural education.

Many times the term "melting pot" has been used to describe the method in which various nationalities immigrated to the United States. This approach advances the thought that individuals let go of their homeland's values/beliefs and assimilate to those of their newly adopted country. Recently, however, we have come to see that rather than a melting pot, the United States is developing a "tossed salad" approach to immigration. In such a scheme everyone does his/her share to contribute to the whole but steadfastly maintains his/her own ethnic identity. The same may be said of the United Kingdom. Evidence of this may be seen in the inner-city

schools where lessons in the Punjabi language and culture are being offered after school hours.

As the year 1997 approaches, many of the residents of Hong Kong are seeking to emigrate to England for political reasons. In addition, citizens from other Commonwealth countries are also looking to come to the United Kingdom for a variety of reasons. During the 18th and 19th century, the expansion of the Empire was very important to England. The raw materials and products she obtained from these areas aided her economy. Now, however, the citizens of those countries are looking to come to their mother country. They are looking for the opportunity of a new life. They are seeking this not only for themselves, but also for their children.

England is experiencing an increase in its minority population. In addition, there is a growing number of underprivileged and homeless people in the country. All of these factors dictate the necessity for flexibility in the design of the National Curriculum. The "Educational Darwinism" discussed earlier is not acceptable to meet the needs of the country's diverse population. Schools with a high percentage of non-English students need extra funding. This funding is required to provide teachers who can teach English as

a second or third language. Classes such as these should also be made available to adults so they may learn how to communicate and survive in their newly adopted country.

"White flight" may occur in inner-city schools if composite scores fall. When this happens, the opportunity for quality education for immigrant children and the poor is substantially decreased. This is because many of the schools which they would attend may be forced to close from a lack of funds. In addition, those students in need of special programs will also find that funds for their specialized program may not be available.

This problem cannot be overemphasized. A growing population that sees no way to advance itself may develop. These people will feel alienated due to a lack of preparation to compete for a higher status in the job market. It will eventually become more costly for the central government to care for them as adults than it would be to provide them with an adequate education as children. The time to act is now. Educational programs should receive the necessary funding. By doing this, the children will receive the education which they need to become productive citizens in a growing economy.

A final note concerns how the middle schools are being phased out through the funding program. Research in the area of the early adolescent indicates that these children are neither miniature adults nor children (Eichhorn, 1986). To place these students in schools where they are either the oldest or the youngest is not in keeping with their development. It will create problems of adjustment which will have a detrimental effect on the fragile self-esteems of these students. The middle school programs that were observed bridged the gap between the primary schools and the comprehensive secondary schools. They provided both academic and personal development courses (PSE) that were designed specifically for children in their early teens.

One of the reasons to phase out the middle school program pertains to the assessment process. The argument being used is that the students should move to the secondary school following the attainment target testing. If this philosophy builds momentum, the middle school professionals may want to investigate a varied age grouping for their program. A suggestion is that the ages of 11-14, much like those in the United States be examined. Such a move would preserve the middle school concept that has developed in the United Kingdom

and still permit the next level to work with the students. A further consideration if this format is followed would include a change in the ages of the children who attend the primary schools as well. The British middle school professionals must now decide if the program they are currently using for the 9 - 13 year old students is an acceptable program for children who are slightly older (11 - 14 years old).

Furthermore, the way middle school students are gradually exposed to various instructors and experiences during their first two years in the middle school is excellent. This procedure is in keeping with the process of helping students adjust to the tasks they will be experiencing later in their schooling. It is this transitional design that is the keystone of the middle school movement. It provides a curriculum geared to the students' needs--one that is advocated by all who practice and study middle level education. It is what we, the educational professionals, know as being in the best interest of our students. It addresses their academic, social, and emotional needs.

And after all, isn't that what education is all about no matter on which side of the Atlantic one lives?

Post Script

Since this study was conducted during late March and early April, 1990, a change has occurred in the United Kingdom. In October, 1990, Mrs. Thatcher resigned her position as prime minister. Her successor, Mr. John Majors, although a member of Mrs. Thatcher's Conservative Party, has not yet indicated his preference on the National Curriculum. It will be interesting to observe which direction the National Curriculum follows since its chief advocate is no longer in power.

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Table 1-1.

SYSTEM OF EDUCATION FOLLOWING 1944 EDUCATION ACT

Nursery School (2-5 years of age) - optional

!

Infant School (5-7 years of age) - compulsory

!

Junior School (7-11 years of age) - compulsory

/ \

Grammar School (11-18) Secondary School (11-15)

!

Sixth Form (16-18)

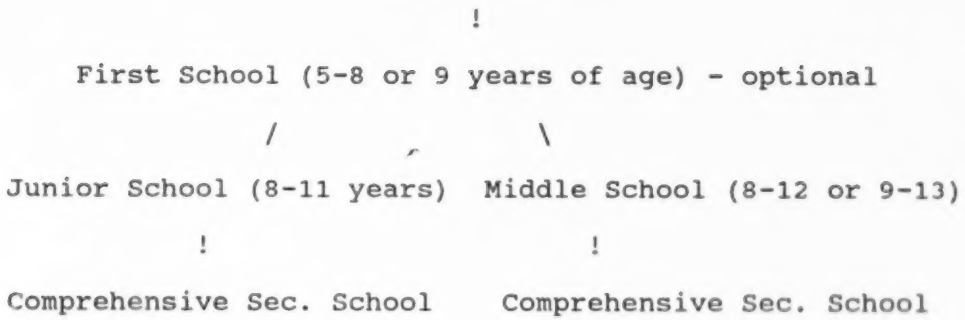
!

University

(Parker, 1979)

Table 1-2.

CURRENT SYSTEM


First School (5-8 or 9 years of age) - optional
Junior School (8-11 years)
Middle School (8-12 or 9-13)
Comprehensive Sec. School
(11-18 years)
Comprehensive Sec. School
(12 or 13-18 years)

(Parker, 1979)

APPENDIX A

Assemblies

In one of the schools, the head teacher discussed the cleanliness of the school and the role of the students in keeping the school clean. The discussion lasted approximately twenty minutes and was presented in a very low-key manner by the head teacher. Every student was paying attention to what he was saying.

In another school the assembly began with the students entering to the music of "Spring" from Vivaldi's The Four Seasons. This piece was chosen by the teacher in charge because the assembly's theme was the first day of spring. This assembly included the reading of student poetry. The poetry themes included both the advent of spring and Mother's Day (occurs in late March in the United Kingdom as opposed to early May as in the United States). In addition three students performed a dance which they had choreographed to commemorate the arrival of spring. The concluding section of the assembly was devoted to the introduction of the newly appointed police liaison to the school. He talked with the students about various aspects of bicycle safety.

At a third school, the assembly centered around a male senior inspector from the LEA. He arrived at the

school with a bouquet of freshly cut flowers and presented a reading to the student body. Before the assembly he indicated that he felt it important for the students to see men in caring roles as well as individuals interested in reading.

APPENDIX B

Discipline

Behavioral Contracts

The behavioral contract involves a negotiations process between parents, head teacher, and student. In it, those involved agree upon what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. After it has been drawn up, it is signed by all who are involved.

Classroom Rules

Most of the rooms did not have any rules posted. However, one of the rooms that did have rules posted had the following:

1) listen to others
2) don't put others down
3) show respect
4) refer to everyone by name
5) don't interrupt
6) try to accept and understand the views of others
7) don't talk about classmates out of class or repeat confidential information (Donnington Middle School, 21 March 1990).

Bullying Theme

The Bayswater Middle School had established a "hot-line" for students to call if they felt they were

being "bullied." This form of assistance allows students to report an incident without the bully knowing who filed the report. In fact, the bully does not know if he/she has been reported by a teacher or another student (D. Parker, 1990).

APPENDIX C

Thematic Topics

An example of the inter relatedness of the topic teaching approach was observed as the students studied World War II. In humanities classes, they examined the political, historical, and social aspects of the War. English classes read prose and poetry about the War. Math classes calculated the distances armies moved during a day's march and science classes studied rocketry.

The non-academic classes associated with C, D, and T also got involved in the unit. The students cooked "meatless" meals in home economics classes and sang popular songs from the 1940s in music classes. In the art classes students drew pictures of how they envisioned the 1940s appeared.

APPENDIX D

Science Class Instruction

A final point concerns the instruction noted in the science classes at the schools. All the schools which were visited had experience-based science courses for their students during the third and fourth years. These courses had students paired and working on various projects such as examining light waves or how plants grow. All the students were involved in various projects which were all related to the same concept. The specialist, i. e. the science teacher, would move throughout the room talking to each pair of students. He asked them probing questions which forced them to examine carefully the progress they were making on their projects.